

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Selectmen, Overseers of the Poor
AND ASSESSORS
OF THE
Town of Northfield,
TOGETHER WITH THE REPORT OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING FEBRUARY 20, 1879.

AMHERST, MASS.:
McCLOUD & WILLIAMS, PRINTERS,
1879.

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Selectmen's Report.

TOWN OFFICERS' BILLS.

Charles H. Green, services as selectman,	\$104 00
Samuel G. Pratt, " " "	87 00
Roswell Holton, " " "	58 74
Dr. Mead, " school committee,	70 75
Charles T. Preston, " " "	77 00
Mrs. E. S. G. Lyman, " "	8 00
E. E. Belding, auditing committee,	2 00
Ira Coy, " "	2 00
John L. Banks, " "	2 00
	\$411 49

PAID FOR SUPPORT OF FOLLOWING PERSONS:

Jennie Lord,	\$75 29
Mrs. Parks,	21 00
Apollos Beach,	19 54
William Webster,	24 00
Susannah Grout,	61 50
Lucretia Sawyer,	94 00
Adelaide Field,	94 00
Hubbard Phelps,	94 00
Mrs Robbins and son,	49 00
Lockhart Doolittle,	19 93
Nellie Parmenter,	13 75
David Tolman,	1 97
Esther Pratt,	5 75
Charles Arling,	1 00
	\$574 73

HIGHWAYS.

Ira Coy,	\$212 95
Thomas Mason,	153 27
John H. Robbins,	225 78
Ansel Collar,	154 97
J. A. Dresser,	75 80
Oscar Woods,	78 65
William Merriman,	34 65
Landman Nye,	109 50
Sumner G. Titus,	290 61
Ezra L. Holton,	99 66
Cyrus Holton,	57 58
Sam. S. Holton,	3 90
Hartwell Johnson,	2 00
S. G. Pratt,	14 58
Lyman Gilbert,	4 55
Frank Whithead, work, 1877,	6 00
Benjamin Streeter, " "	3 25
Chas. E. Webster, " "	2 58
William Burrows,	2 10
Dwight Bass,	21 27
A. A. Holton, cash paid for work,	10 35
	\$1564 00

MISCELLANEOUS.

Henry Nelson,	\$ 40 00
S. G. Pratt, paid on road case,	6 00
" services on Pine Meadow road,	29 71
Roswell Holton, " " "	22 62
Chas. H. Green, " " "	18 75
W. J. Phelps, repairing plough and scraper,	6 00
Asa A. Holton, cash paid for building culvert near M. C. Miller's,	175 00
Chas. Pomeroy, insuring town house,	46 00
" " abatement of highway tax on Perry farm,	4 73

R. K. Caldwell, services as Collector,	69 00
“ “ discount on taxes,	291 31
“ “ services as Constable,	23 50
“ “ error in taxes,	2 75
“ “ abatement of poor men's taxes,	30 32
Asa A. Holton, cash paid as per bill,	\$ 8 80
Henry Wright, 2d, for driving hearse,	39 50
“ “ care of town hall clock and making returns of deaths,	71 85
Gratia Adams, error in taxes,	3 30
Charles Stratton, painting cemetery fence,	6 00
Chas. Green, money deposited for E. H. Stuart,	200 00
“ “ for expense in suit of Stewart & Hutchins,	208 85
“ “ for repairs on town hall,	5 25
E. H. Starkey, repairs on town hall,	75
Cyrus Holton, for mowing cemetery,	1 00
S. Y. Walker, error in taxes,	10 34
A. C. Parsons, for oil and paint for W. Northfield cemetery fence,	11 92
W. J. Phelps, repairing cemetery gate,	4 00
Alexander Fusha, mowing cemetery,	1 50
John Bowman, painting guide boards,	3 00
Freeman Hilliard, mowing cemetery,	2 00
E. O. Wheeler, watering trough,	3 00
Elias Lyman, services as treasurer,	40 00
“ “ services as clerk,	38 15
“ “ cash paid as per bill,	9 72
Henry Johnson, abatement on taxes, Perry farm,	4 73
Dwight Priest, error in taxes,	1 65
George Alexander, repairing scraper,	2 00
Aaron Morgan, for guide boards,	2 00
J. L. Preston, expense to Springfield,	5 00
S. G. Pratt, expense on Millers river bridge,	1 81
E. O. Felton, lumber for bridge,	10 36
M. D. Stratton, for plank,	12 15
A. A. Long, plank and labor on bridge,	58 60

Liberty Page, plank,	45 00	
Lucretia Belknap,	62 19	
J. P. Aldrich, work on cemetery fence,	3 75	
Albert Wright, wood for town house,	4 67	
Charles H. Green, wood for town house,	15 00	
“ “ “ for Wm. Reed's family,	9 00	
J. A. Williams, wood for town house, 1877,	4 00	
E. S. G. Lyman, “ “ “	4 00	
Geo. Stevens, support of Jenny Lord,	9 00	
S. G. Pratt, support of Susan Grout,	27 50	
John A. Preston, goods furnished poor, as per bill,	10 10	
Leicester Hale, board of Jenny Lord,	48 00	
A. R. Lyman, meat furnished poor, as per bill,	17 52	
Harriet A. Kealy, support of Wm. Webster,	24 00	
Overseers of poor of Orange,	14 71	
“ “ Weymouth,	21 00	
Henry Webster, meal furnished poor,	10 20	
Henry Wright, part support of poor,	66 87	
Shepherd Holden, provisions furnished Mrs Robbins	17 98	
Paid Overseers of poor of Wendell and Erving, on J. L. Preston's account,	183 93	
Roswell Holton, cash paid Dr. Wheeler,	5 35	
A. J. Arling, ladder for town house, and trimming tree,	4 00	
George W. Page, keeping 457 tramps,	114 25	
Dr. Pierce, medical attendance on poor,	6 75	
Dr. R. C. Ward, “ “	15 00	
		\$2,876 69

LIBRARY.

R. C. Ward,	\$100 00	
Chas. Pomeroy,	75 00	
R. C. Ward,	25 00	
A. C. Parsons,	11 55	
		\$211 55

SCHOOLS.

Appropriation,	\$2500 00	
State school fund,	231 49	
Dog fund,	97 50	
Interest on surplus revenue,	70 00	
		\$2,898 99
Drawn by orders,		1,938 03
Balance,		960 96

FINANCIAL CONDITION OF THE TOWN,
FEBRUARY 20TH, 1879.

SELECTMEN'S BILLS.

Asa A. Holton,	\$97 50
Samuel G. Pratt,	101 25
Roswell Holton,	65 45

SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

R. C. Ward,	71 25
Charles T. Preston,	18 75

AUDITORS.

E. E. Belding,	2 00	
Ira Coy,	2 00	
S. G. Titus,	2 00	
		\$ 460 20

DEBTS OUTSTANDING.

Henry note and interest,	\$1,045 00	
Orders outstanding,	343 44	
Due schools,	960 96	
		2,349 40
Total,		\$2,809 60

CREDITS.

By balance in treasury,	\$2,224 94	
Uncollected taxes,	485 07	
J. L. Preston note,	50 00	
Bank interest due,	40 00	
		\$2,800 01
Balance against town,		9 59

ASA A. HOLTON,	} <i>Selectmen of</i>
SAMUEL G. PRATT,	
	<i>Northfield.</i>

Treasurer's Report.

FROM FEBRUARY 16TH, 1878, TO FEBRUARY 20TH, 1879.

RECEIPTS.

Cash on hand Feb. 16th, 1878,	\$1,013 94
Rec'd of R. K. Caldwell, Collector,	7,900 00
Selectmen, money borrowed,	1,400 00
L. T. Webster, administrator of	
P. Lamb,	376 35
for liquor licenses,	201 00
of State of Mass. corporation tax,	534 42
" " National Bank tax,	509 63
" " State school fund,	231 49
" " State aid,	168 00
County Treasurer, dog fund,	97 50
Town of Shutesbury,	104 36
Interest on surplus revenue,	70 00
Cash of J. L. Preston,	57 46
for use of town hall, 1877,	40 20
" " 1878,	60 00
of Dr. Mead, sale of school books,	15 00
Wm. Brazzee, auctioneer's license,	2 00
R. K. Caldwell, guardian of Mary	
Pierson,	82 00
	\$12,863 35

DISBURSEMENTS.

Paid outstanding school bills,	\$ 129 68
county tax,	1,194 44
orders drawn by Selectmen,	6,623 82
State tax,	430 00
State aid,	180 00
Worcester lunatic hospital,	189 36
State reform school,	52 00
one-fourth liquor license,	50 25
Chas. H. Green, note and interest,	1,284 60
Henry Wright, note and interest,	418 00
city of Springfield, for poor, 1877,	36 94
city of Boston, for poor, 1877,	23 33
town of Weymouth, for poor, 1877,	26 00
Cash on hand Feb. 20th, 1879,	2,224 93
	\$12,863 35

ELIAS LYMAN, TREASURER.

We have examined the accounts of Elias Lyman, Treasurer of Northfield, and find them correct and properly vouched for.

E. E. BELDING,	} <i>Auditors.</i>
IRA COY,	
S. G. TITUS,	

Assessors' Report.

Number of polls	462
Number of dwelling houses,	385
Number of horses,	363
Number of cows,	599
Number of sheep,	476
Number of acres of land taxed,	19,858
Total valuation of real estate,	\$586,513 00
Total valuation of personal estate,	80,672 00
Total,	<u>\$667,185 00</u>
Total amount of taxes assessed,	\$8,124 44
Rate per cent.,	1 10

ASSESSMENT.

For Schools,	\$2,500 00
Contingent,	2,000 00
Highways,	1,800 00
County tax,	1,194 44
State tax,	430 00
Overlay,	200 00
	<u>\$8,124 44</u>

Report of the Library Committee.

Your committee submit the following report :

Received of the Northfield social library,	1,614 volumes.
Bought of Mr. Joel Munsell,	47 “
Donated by “ “	12 “
Whole number in Public Library,	1,673
Paid Mr. Joel Munsell for new books,	\$65 62
“ “ “ for record book,	8 50
Total,	\$74 12

This leaves \$25.88 appropriated for new books now in the hands of Mr. Munsell.

Paid Mr. George Long, for three new cases,	\$25 00
“ “ repairing four cases,	12 00
John Bowman, painting and graining seven cases,	35 00
Charles Pomeroy, moving cases,	3 00
R. C. Ward, services as librarian,	25 00
Total,	\$100 00

We engaged Mr. Joel Munsell of Albany, N. Y., to print the catalogues, as he agreed to do this work gratuitously. We quote from a letter of his, dated May 7, 1878 : “ I am glad to learn that Northfield is astir for a town library. Such enterprises are becoming popular in New England. I will print your catalogues as a *contribution*.” We received from him 400 catalogues and 2,000 labels, also a letter, dated Dec. 11, 1878, in which is the following extract : “ The regular charges for the printing would be about \$60. I will inquire if you can make it \$25 for catalogues and labels.”

Your committee have used the amount appropriated for the care of the library, and have nothing to pay Mr. Munsell for printing catalogues. We hope the town will appropriate money for the payment of this bill, leaving the money now in his hands for the purchase of new books.

Owing to the delay in getting the money appropriated for the library and the delay in printing the catalogues, the library was not open to the public till December 21, 1878, since which time books have been issued as follows :

Dec. 21, 1878, 41 volumes.	Dec. 28, 1878, 112 volumes.
Jan. 4, 1879, 150 “	Jan. 11, 1879, 158 “
Jan. 18, 195 “	Jan. 25, 216 “
Feb. 1, 195 “	Feb. 8, 185 “
Feb. 15, 208 “	

CHARLES POMEROY,	}	<i>Library</i>
L. T. WEBSTER,		
E. WELLS COLTON,	}	<i>Committee.</i>
T. J. CLARK,		
R. C. WARD,		

Northfield, Mass., Feb. 20, 1879.

Report of the School Committee.

The annual report of the School Committee should contain, not simply a measure of the intellectual ability of the writer, but a plain statement of facts relating to our schools, with suggestions whereby they may be improved. The Town have generously raised and appropriated money for the support of schools, and if they have not been a success, the cause must be sought for elsewhere. That they have failed to reach the acme of perfection, or approximated as closely as they might, is an indisputable fact. The amount of schooling for the past year has been ample, but the quality has not been, in all instances, up to the desired standard. This is largely in consequence of a lack of system in managing the schools as a whole. The provincial method, adopted one year ago, has not reflected to the interest of the schools, though it may, in some districts, have reduced the current expenses.

No greater mistake has been made during the past year than that of employing teachers because they were cheap. Teachers are merchantable, and those who are experienced and successful command good wages. The plea that young, inexperienced teachers may be engaged for our small schools, should not be tolerated for a moment, especially those who have not the natural qualifications necessary for a successful teacher. We would not exclude from our schools all save those who have had experience, but would employ none but those fitted for the position they propose to fill. A knowledge of books is desirable, still, this is but part of that which a good teacher must possess. To draw a pen picture of a good teacher is a task from which we shrink. The unwise emulation on the part of the Prudential Committee, in securing teachers with as little expense as possible, is reprehensible. If this be the sole object in view, the

schools will be failures by a very large percentage. The same rule applies in this business as in all other branches. An expert with larger wages is more profitable than a novice, whose services are rendered gratuitously. Four months' school, under the teaching of a *first-class* teacher, would improve our children far more than six months, with any other but a first-class teacher. Our schools have lost the services of some of the best teachers, as we could not pay as much as they could command in other schools. This is wrong. The best are the cheapest.

It is not the intention of your committee to individualize each school, and speak of the merits and demerits of each respective teacher. We feel that every teacher has *tried* to do the best, and if some have failed to meet our highest hopes, let us be charitable, for they may have had obstacles to contend against, of which we little know. The teacher's vocation is onerous, as every one knows who has had any experience. We cannot find perfection in school teachers more than in any other class of people, and we often magnify their faults to an inordinate degree.

How can our schools be made the most successful? We submit a few suggestions which, if followed, we think would place our schools in an enviable position, compared with their present condition. We would first have a uniform system for each school. The scholar's time and teacher's labor are not utilized to the best possible advantage under the present way of managing our schools. The object has been, on the part of both teacher and scholar, to go over as much territory as possible during the term, comprehension and practical use being of minor importance. The public are not satisfied with this routine way of teaching, and some measure should be adopted to break it up. We find scholars at the age of fifteen not so far advanced as they should be at twelve, and this not the fault of the scholar or teacher. It is simply because their time and intellectual power have not been made the most of. Teachers naturally follow the more brilliant pupils at the expense of the less favored. To avoid this, without injury to the more brilliant, is the object which we seek to attain. Perhaps no better way to accomplish this result is known than to have each school graded. We would have every scholar know, at the commencement of the term, what is expected of him in

his several studies during that term, and, if he fails in his examination at the close of the term, then he falls back into the next lower class. The school terms should be of uniform length, the studies apportioned to each term, care being exercised that no more be allotted to each class than can be thoroughly mastered, with ordinary diligence on the part of teachers and scholars. With this plan both parties have a definite object in view all the time, and ever avoid continually going over the same ground in a semi-unconscious condition.

The scholars would be stimulated to more thoroughness in their studies, and greater regularity in their attendance, knowing that if they fail in their examination, they lose their place in their class. Again, with this plan we know just where every scholar will be in his studies at any given time, provided he attends school regularly, and applies himself diligently. The teacher also receives an impetus, as she would dislike to have any of her school fail in the examination, for it would be presumptive evidence that she had failed in duty. With an active, thorough School Committee, and the hearty sympathy and coöperation of the public, this plan might be adopted with very decidedly beneficial results to our schools.

It is unpleasant to inaugurate any new methods, when you feel the criticising gaze of the public eye fastened upon you, ready to detect and magnify the slightest mistakes, but terribly slow to discover anything tending to improvement. To make any radical change in our schools a success, we must have the support of the parents. Honest and impartial criticism should not be withheld whenever and wherever it is needed. The parents have obligations in conjunction with the teacher, which many lose sight of and some wholly ignore. To provide a place for their children to attend school and secure the services of some one to instruct them, are unavoidable duties, but these are not all. They should consider it a sacred duty that their children be enabled to attend school regularly. A good practical education is the richest legacy they can bequeath them, and who can be so parsimonious and short-sighted as to deprive them of this privilege when it is within the reach of all? No labor too arduous, no sacrifice too great, to be willingly borne that your children may reap the full benefit of our common schools.

Parents should cheerfully second the teachers' efforts in the presence of their children, but reserve all criticisms. Unjust, harsh expressions in relation to the school or school house cannot result in any good to the child, nay, it must inevitably prove injurious. Our school houses may not be such as we could wish, still they should be clothed with a sanctity sufficient, at least, to protect them from the ravages of the youthful jack knife, or the dire effects of flying missiles. In short, the old school house should be considered as exempt from destruction as the home or the church.

Another element in the education of children is largely influenced by the home circle; the plasticity of the young mind. When we consider the susceptibility with which the young mind receives impressions, and the tenacity with which it retains them, how important it is that we should use the utmost care in making those impressions. In this parents can, and very often do, unwittingly neutralize the best efforts of the teacher. An infant child of English parentage, placed where it hears nothing but the German language spoken, would (excluding the law of heredity), speak German as fluently as one of that nationality.

What must be the effect upon the child who is constantly hearing ungrammatical expressions and unjust criticisms about the teacher? No teacher, however devoted she may be to her calling, can counteract this influence. Great care should be exercised to avoid the use of expressions inconsistent with a sound literary and moral education. Parents are inclined to judge the merits of a teacher by the reports of their children. This is not a safe guide, for is it probable that an interested party will give an impartial, unprejudiced account of a matter pertaining to self? We would not throw aside the child's story, nor would we give it full credence, until by investigation we had proved its veracity beyond doubt. Should prejudice warp the child's mind, what an opportunity presents itself for a timely and useful lesson.

Parents should, by their frequent visits to the schools, show to the teacher their heartfelt interest in her work, making suggestions whenever needed, which would always be accepted by the teacher in kindness, if made in the same spirit.

The public at large should feel a deep interest in our common schools. Edward Everett says, "Education is the one living fountain which must water every part of the social system." This is true in all ages and nations. If the fountain be pure, and well supplied, then will every and all parts watered by it receive a permanent benefit. Reform would be uncalled for, and the word would become obsolete. Our prisons, jails, and houses of correction would soon be empty, from a lack of recruits; money, now used to enforce law and subdue the vicious, could be used for more noble and glorious objects.

What suggestions can we give to teachers? First: Do not enter the profession unless you have a natural fitness and sincere love for the calling. Let no mercenary motive actuate you in your decision. When once installed in this business, let your whole time and energy be devoted to the advancement of this noblest of noble professions. While in the school room, your eye and ear should quickly detect any deviation from good deportment, which should promptly be corrected. All unintentional deviations or mistakes should be overlooked. Your scholars should be thrown as much as possible upon their dignity.

Ever remember that perfection is the boon of no one, and if you should make a mistake, by omission or commission, do not hesitate to acknowledge the same to your school. This will not lower your dignity, or lessen your authority as a teacher, but, on the contrary, will raise you in the estimation of your pupils. Be studiously careful that little mistakes do not continually recur, lest your scholars lose confidence in your ability as an instructor. Adopt the monitorial system as much as possible, and with proper management this may be used largely, with great advantage to all. There is no better way to make your instruction practical. Be not scrupulously particular in noticing every little youthful prank, when not actuated by a vicious motive, for often the noticing leads to more trouble than its non-observance.

Finally: Let no opportunity pass in which you can impress upon your scholars a lesson that may improve them intellectually or morally.

REPORT OF SCHOOL BOOKS BELONGING TO THE TOWN.

Received of School Committee of 1877-8,	\$37 52	
Bought of L. T. Webster,	29 30	
" J. L. Hammett,	57 20	
" F. G. Tilton & Co.,	1 68	
" Knight, Adams & Co.,	55 39	
		\$181 09
Received of L. T. Webster, for books sold,	\$ 55 39	
Account of books given assessors,	15 19	
Amount of books burned,	110 51	
		181 09

Your committee agreed with Mr. Webster to keep and sell school books at 10 per cent. commission. The above account is as correct as we can give with the data left after the fire.

R. C. WARD, Chairman,	} <i>School</i> <i>Committee.</i>
ELIAS LYMAN, Sec'y,	
CHAS. T. PRESTON,	
MRS. E. S. G. LYMAN,	
JOHN L. BANKS,	
JOHN MATTOON,	

Northfield, Mass., Feb. 21, 1879.

